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OF
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M R S . D E B O R A H P R I N C E .

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D E V O U T M E D I T A T I O N S

O F

M R S . S A R A H G I L L ,

DAUGHTERS of the Late

R E V . M R . T H O M A S P R I N C E ,

Minister of the South Church, Boston.

E D I N B U R G H :

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IF this PIECE meets with encouragement, there will soon be published SIX SERMONS by the late Rev. Mr. PRINCE, which have never yet appeared in Print.



PART OF
MR. PRINCE'S SERMON,

On JOB i. 21.

Occasioned by the Decease of his eldest Daughter,
MRS. DEBORAH PRINCE, 20th July 1744, in
the 21st year of her age.

YOU have generally known her character; I need not, therefore, give it to this assembly; and I am more especially restrained, not only by my near relation, but by what she said to me with all the emotions of a grieved heart, three or four days before she died. "Dear father, I have been told you speak to people in my commendation, I beg you would not! I am a poor miserable sinner, I do not deserve to have one word said in my favour! Pray, Sir, do not. You cannot think how grievous it is to me." On these accounts, I must forbear her character. But because God's dealings with her, both before and in her sickness, have been so remarkable, I cannot but think it will be for his glory, and your advantage, to present you with some relation of them.

As she grew up, God was pleased to restrain her from youthful vanities, to make her serious, and move her to study the Bible, and the best of authors, both of history and divinity; among the latter of which, Dr. Watts's and Mrs. Rowe's writings were very agreeable and familiar to her. The spirit of God was also pleased to work on her heart by

Dr. Sewall's ministry, for whom she had a high esteem, and by other means of grace ; especially when she came to be about fourteen years of age, "convincing and humbling her (as in a paper of her's she represents it) " of all her sins both original and actual, of their greatness and heinousness, and of her need of a Saviour ; enabling her, as she hoped, to repent of her sins and forsake them ; to look to Christ as a compleat Redeemer ; to renounce her own righteousness, and depend on his only ; and making her willing to accept him as offered in the gospel, as her prophet, priest, and king, to instruct, intercede for, and rule over her."

Upon this she was desirous of renewing her covenant in public, and coming up to all God's ordinances, but apprehensions of her own unworthiness, and eating and drinking judgment to herself, discouraged and prevented her till 18th July, 1739, when she narrowly escaped being drowned, in her father's bosom ; for as I had just received her into my arms in a boat, in order to go aboard a vessel in the harbour, bound to her uncle Denny's at Arrowick, the boat sheered off, and I fell back with her into the salt water, ten feet deep, with which she was almost filled ; and we both continued under it out of sight of her brother and second sister, looking on, for above a minute. And if a couple of strangers from Connecticut had not providentially been near at hand to reach her quickly, in a minute or two more she had been past recovery. But now she lived five years and two days longer.

Being affected with this great danger and deliverance, she seemed to be further awakened and stirred up to her duty of devoting herself to her divine Preserver, of walking in all his commandments, and in living to his glory ; and in consequence of this, at her own motion, she was, on Lord's day the 5th of the

the following month, propounded; and the 19th, publicly gave herself to God in covenant, and came into full communion with us.

When Mr. Whitfield came and preached in the fall of the year ensuing, she, with multitudes of others, was excited to a livelier view of eternity, to a greater care of her immortal soul, to a stricter search into herself, and a more earnest labour after vital piety, and the power of godliness, and to make them more the business of her life: and now such experimental and searching writers as Mr. Shepherd of Cambridge, Mr. William Guthrie of Scotland, Messrs. Flavel and Mead of England, Mr. Stoddart of Northampton, and Mr. Mather of Windsor in New England, &c. were more diligently read, and highly valued.

She now suspected all her former experiences, that her heart remained unrenewed, and that she had not rightly received Christ, until 13th December, 1740, when, on a day of private prayer and fasting, those divine passages were set home with surprising and overcoming power on her distressed soul, Matth. viii. Mark i. and Luke v. "And there came a leper to
 " him full of leprosy who seeing Jesus, fell on his
 " face, and besought him, saying, LORD, if thou wilt,
 " thou *canst* make me clean. And Jesus moved
 " with compassion, put forth his hand and touched
 " him, and saith unto him, I will, be thou clean;
 " and as soon as he had spoken, immediately the le-
 " prosy departed from him, and he was cleansed." With those passages of grace, there came into her such a sweet and raised view, both of the power and willingness of the dear Redeemer, to cleanse her from the leprosy of sin, and save her, as to satisfy her of it, and draw her to him in such a manner as she never felt before: and she told her younger sister, that if ever she rightly embraced the Saviour and was converted, she thought it was at
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that happy season; though this I never knew till since her funeral, it being one of her infirmities to be too reserved.

Whether she had any particular apprehension of the shortness of her life, I cannot tell; but God, who knows it, seemed to put her on redeeming her time, and eagerly improving opportunities of hearing his word, both publickly and privately, in season and out of season, and in the stormiest weather, as if she had,—and every opportunity would be the last. Some people blamed her, as being over-diligent and eager, but she had salvation and eternity in view, went on steadily without regarding such suggestions, seemed to grow dead to the present world, and to mind nothing so much as making her calling and election sure.

Mr. Tennant's searching preaching raised in her, as in many others, a great and constant jealousy of being deceived, and upon every spiritual declension, a cloud of darkness overwhelmed her, and inclined her to judge she was. He insisting, that without sanctifying grace, our blessed Saviour gives none a right to partake at his table, occasioned her much perplexity; for, from thence she argued, that unless she knew she had sanctifying grace, she could not know she had a right; and to partake without knowing she had a right, would be not to partake in faith, but in presumption, and this she had no right to do: and hence, when doubts of her state arose, she durst not participate, but only attended with desire, and, I believe, with deep regret and self-abasement. So, though her jealousies and fears were troublesome, I am apt to think they were useful, not only to make her look into and see herself, and make her more broken, humble, and careful, but also to excite her cares and labours after livelier degrees of grace, and the clearer evidence of it.

Sometimes she had light and comfort, but I think oftener

oftener otherwise; and this seemed another infirmity, that she was afraid of comfort, lest it belonged not to her, and she should be thereby deluded. For I think she should have humbly received every comfort which the sovereign God by the scriptures offered her, to excite her thankfulness, love, praise, and zeal, encouragement to go on in her Christian course, and care to guard against ingratitude, negligence, and security.

In her *lively and pleasant frames*, she wrote down her happy ideas, and they were her choicest writings; but afterwards, in a time of decay, she burnt them; and the reason she gave to an intimate companion, and one of the female society to which she joined for the most endearing exercise of social piety, was, because, in case she should be suddenly taken away, her friends would think her to be as good as those writings represented.

But I now come to her *sickness*.

On Tuesday 29th May she was seized on a sudden with a slow fever, and, upon going up to her chamber, dropped a word as if she should never come down alive.

From the beginning she was much more apprehensive of danger than any else; and though concerned about her soul, yet complained of her stupidity, blindness of mind, impenitence, and unbelief; denying she had any sanctifying grace, but judging she had been deceiving herself with the counterfeit resemblance of it.

Her fever continued without intermission for above a month, and then becoming heftical, persevered with some small abatements in the former part of the day, then rising higher in the afternoons and nights, till she expired.

Though she had several surprizing turns when she thought she was dying, yet I saw no very dangerous symptoms till Lord's day, 1st July, at my returning
home

home from the afternoon exercise, when she was grown so ill, that we apprehended she was hastening to her great change, and her mother thought herself obliged, in faithfulness, to tell her own apprehension. Upon which she thanked her for the kindness, but quickly fell into *great distress* in the awakening views of a *near eternity*, and her being unprepared for it. With agony she cried,—“O! I am just going into eternity! and I have no interest in Christ, and I cannot submit, I cannot believe! O what shall I do! O, dear Sir, what shall I do,” &c. I told her, “there was no other way but to condemn herself at the foot of the all-sufficient and compassionate Redeemer, and there to lie and die, imploring the mercy he offered; and if she did so, I believed he would in no ways cast her off, or let her perish.” It would break a heart of stone to hear her! and O the horror of that night! it was one of the most distressing I ever knew!

We were afraid of her dying all that night.—When I was obliged to leave her that she might get some rest, I ordered the watch^r, as at other times, to call me if there should be any alteration: and when I came to her early in the morning, I found her exceeding ill, weakened, and discouraged; and that she had not slept a wink, being afraid of closing her eyes, lest she should suddenly open into eternity. But after some discourse and prayers, she was persuaded to resign herself into the arms of Jesus, composed herself to rest, and slept, and upon awaking was a little refreshed, which I improved to encourage her.

However, her awful *darkness* still continued; and though I reasoned with her, about her *former experience*, yet all in vain. “O dear father,” cried she, “you have better apprehensions of me than you should have; you do not know what a vile creature I am; I have dreadfully apostatized from
“ Christ,

“ Christ, have grown exceeding negligent of religious duties, and was, returning to the world again.” I told her, we did not perceive it; that I could not see those decays she spoke of, to be inconsistent with a regenerate state, though they were matter of deep abasement; and she should have a care she denied not the gracious work of God within her. “ She begged me not to speak to her nor pray for her as a converted person, but as a wretched, unconverted sinner, who had closed with Christ from merely sensitive and selfish motives, as fear of hell, and not from the highest apprehension and love of him, as most desirable to see and enjoy.”

I told her, Christ, as a compassionate Saviour, had revealed hell to us, on purpose that we might be afraid of it, and by the fear be moved to fly to him to save us from it; and this must, therefore, be a dutiful compliance with his gracious purpose; that this kindness in discovering hell, with his concern and willingness to save us from it, is a part of his amiableness, for which we ought to love and embrace him, though we should, indeed, be excited also with the higher motives of his personal excellencies. But by her former experience, it seemed to me she had closed with him from the views of these as well as the other.---“ She could not deny, that she had sometimes thought so, but could see nothing of his loveliness now; and concluded, she had been deceived.”

I also argued, from her love to the house and word of God, and to his people and ministers; from her peculiar love to those whom she apprehended to be most eminent for vital piety, especially those ministers who most laid open the hypocrisy of the hearts of men, who made formalists most uneasy, and were most zealous for the power of godliness; from her bitter mourning, of which we were witnesses, for the loss
of

of the Rev. Mr. Cooper, though she was neither related to, nor acquainted with him any otherwise, than by a diligent hearing his lectures; but only because of his eminence in piety, preaching, and activity in promoting the doctrines of grace, the conversion of sinners, edification of converts, and therein the cause of Christ *, as also from her choice of pious companions, and other hopeful signs of grace, but all to no purpose; and, though the Rev. Dr. Sewall likewise laboured to resolve her scruples, we found that none but the *Almighty* himself could do it; though we believed her to be a child of God, yet if his Spirit did not witness with her spirit that she was so, she could not see it, nor could we help her to the view, and to him we were obliged to leave it. Dr. Sewall observing to me, from his former acquaintance with her, that if she should die in darkness, we should have good ground to hope, that God had given grace, and would take her to glory.

I then changed the tenour of my discoursing from day to day; and *supposing she were not converted*, represented her case as indeed very dreadful, but not as desperate; and at several times, as she was through grievous illness able to bear, endeavoured to set before her the infinite fountain of mercy and grace in God; how this fountain is open, free, and eternally overflowing through Christ, even to the chief of sinners; how he delights in overflowing; how he thereby glorifies every person in the Godhead, both Father, Son, and Spirit; and how he would be so far from losing any glory, that he would glorify more
of

* Her younger sister had also just been telling me, that the day after Mr. Cooper died, this eldest sister had such an awful view of the anger of God therein, as she was hardly able to bear up under it. I did not insist on her aggravated sorrow for the loss of her Rev. Uncle Thacher, because of his relation, though he was very dear to her, on the like accounts as Mr. Cooper.

of his perfections, in forgiving and saving her, than in rejecting and damning her. I endeavoured also to set before her the wondrous pity, condescension, offices, humiliation, sufferings, sacrifice, righteousness, merits, exaltation, glory, power, grace, calls, and promises of Christ; how touched with a fellow-feeling of her infirmities and miseries, how tenderly compassionate, how open his arms, how earnestly inviting and intreating, how ready to receive her, bestow his righteousness on her, intercede for and reconcile her to the *holy God*; that one single intercession of his would save her eternally. He need only say, "O divine Father, here is a poor guilty, wretched, perishing, and ruined sinner; for my sake be reconciled to her;" and God would be reconciled that very moment; that Christ only waited for her coming towards him; and, as the father of the prodigal, he would even run immediately to meet and embrace her, intercede for, and reconcile her; yea, bestow *himself*, his *Spirit*, and all his graces and benefits on her.

She would reply:—"O she could not come to Christ, she could not trust in him, she could not believe." I told her, if she thought she could not come to him, nor towards him, he was come to her; he was come in shewing her her sin, danger, perishing condition, and absolute necessity; he had done abundantly for her already, and was ready to do infinitely more; he was now at hand, and looked on her; and she need only look up to him, and he would intercede and save her; or, if he had given her a heart to cast herself down at his feet, and resolve that if she perished, she would perish *there*, I believed he would never let her perish *there*: He must have infinitely more mercy than the bowels of her own father for her. "O but this heart of mine (she said) is hard, and my mind blind, and I can do nothing." I told her, that to feel her utter
 impotence,

impotence, and lost condition, and condemn herself at the foot of the Redeemer, was the gospel way to receive both saving strength and righteousness from him: What could she wish for more, than those most gracious words, 1 Cor. xi. 31. *For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.* "She seemed resolved to lie at his feet, though she perished there," but no ray of light or comfort,---nor was she able to submit to die, till death appeared.

My dear people, you must needs be sensible of the great distress of a father's heart, putting his soul in her soul's place, for so many weeks together.

Incessant prayers were made for her both in public and private by her relatives and pious acquaintances, who dearly loved her; but they all, till the *last half hour of her life*, seemed unanswered. Some were persuaded, God would not remove her till he gave her light, peace, and joy in believing; and these two things especially were matter of thankfulness, of hope and comfort to us: 1st, That God was pleased to continue to her all along, when she was quite awake, the clear exercise of her understanding, as also great calmness and composure, unless now and then on some sudden apprehension of dying: 2^d, That he was also pleased to enable her constantly to bear his hand, with meekness, patience, and humility; condemning and abasing herself, and justifying him; yea, almost continually, upon the smallest instance of bodily relief, or kindness of others, tenderly repeating it,—*O how good is God! O how good is God!*—and so running up every comfort to him.

But in such perplexing darkness she continued till Friday 20th July, about sunset, when, with surprize, she entered the valley of the shadow of death.

About five in the afternoon I was hastily called up, and found her in great distress for want of breath; and, no doubt, she was actually dying, though it was hidden from me. I first asked her,

"If

"If she was yet enabled to resign to the dispose
 "and arms of Christ?" She replied, *she hoped*
she was in a great measure; which was more than I
 had yet heard from her. After prayer and some
 discourse, she was a little relieved, and we left her
 to compose herself to sleep. But, sleeping a few mi-
 nutes, about six she waked in the strong agonies of
 death, and was in great agonies all the while Dr.
 Sewall was praying, and the physician was with her,
 but, blessed be God, in her full senses.

When they had left her, I told her, the physician
 said he could do no more, and we must resign her to
 the arms of mercy. Upon this she surprizingly and
 calmly composed herself to die, but had no strength
 to speak; and, her breath failing, shut her eyes,
 and seemed to be dying away. And now was the
 most dismal time of all! to see her depart in dark-
 ness, without any gleam of light or comfort! and,
 looking on her, I said, "Dear child! we shall ne-
 ver hear her speak one word more!"

O the distress in the room!—But in the height
 thereof, when I was holding her arm in my hands,
 in three or four minutes, to our great surprize, she
 opened her eyes; and, recovering a small measure of
 breath, with an inward interrupted speech, through
 great difficulty for want of breath and strength, she
 had just time to whisper to me in a new language,
 which she expressed with great earnestness, exerting
 herself to the utmost, so as to be heard by four or
 five who were nearest to her;—*O I love the Lord Je-*
sus with all my heart; I see such an amiableness, such an
amiableness in him; I prize him above a thousand worlds;
all the delights and pleasures of the world are nothing to
him! I asked her, if she could now resign herself to
 his arms? She replied,—*O yes, I believe in him! I re-*
joice in him, and I rejoice in all the agonies I have borne!
and tell the young people of it; tell such a one, and such
a one, and such a one; and tell the society for the strength-

ening their faith, and their encouragement to go on; and tell such a one not to mind the vanities of the world, but seek to make her hope stronger. Tell such a one, to live nearer to God. Tell such a one, not to be so careful about worldly matters, but to be more careful after Christ and grace. And having delivered the like pithy, pertinent, and pathetic messages for five others, I then asked her;—Well, my dear child! what have you to say to me? “O, Sir, said she, that you may be more *“ fervent in your ministry, and in exhorting and exhorting with sinners!*

All the while she said these things in the burning exercise of love to Christ and souls, I felt the strong convulsions and trembling agonies of death in her arm; and, as soon as ever she had finished her said wish for me, finding her life a going, she had only so much breath remaining as just to say, *And now, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!* and letting her head fall back, and dying away, we prayed; and, while we were in prayer, resigning her soul to Jesus, she, without a groan or sob, breathed it into his bosom.

I repeated her words, as she delivered them, so as the rest in the room might know them; and never did I see so much distress, especially round a dying bed, on a sudden turn into so much joy. I could scarce have thought it possible before, that a father, a mother, a brother, and sisters, could have been so transported in the expiring moments of one so near and dear to them.

O the mighty power of God! O the adorableness of his sovereign pleasure! O the amazing depths of his wisdom! O the wonders of his pity and grace! O the tenderness and loveliness of the dear Redeemer! what irresistible reason is here to admire, and love, and chuse, and seek him, and relinquish every creature as loss, and dross, and dung, in comparison with him! and, O, what enlivening arguments are here, in the midst of the thickest darkness, like
the

the belly of hell; to hope and wait to the latest breath of life, for mercy and salvation!

Never let a poor disconsolate soul from this time despair in the mercy and power of God, while it feels nothing else but guilt and filth, and impotence, and wretchedness, and ruin within itself.

O the glory and divinity of the true religion of the blessed Jesus! To see even a *feeble, tender, darkened, self-condemned* soul; patiently and meekly bearing all the anguishes of a constant fever, with its restless nights, accompanied with fears of death and eternal misery, for seven weeks and a half together; humbly justifying the holy God, and continually admiring his goodness to her; and, after all her earnest desires of life, that she might have a further season of making sure of a happy eternity, till she came into the agonies of death; yet then at once to lose her fears, and even rejoice in those very agonies; yea, chiefly, to employ her few expiring moments in expressing her dying concern for their salvation who were outliving her.---Is this in the power of nature, or of a mere creature? or, is it not the clearest evidence of a power *divine*,--a clear display of the excellence of *Christ* and his religion, and a pleasing demonstration of its happy reality.

O what abundant cause for all her relatives and friends, yea for the people of God, who have heard of her darkness, and pitied and prayed for her, now to thank and praise him, and to encourage themselves and others to seek and hope in him for the time to come;

O what unrepliable reasons for her *nearest and dearest friends and relatives* to submit entirely to the sovereign, righteous, holy, and bereaving hand of God, especially when ending with such a smile of mercy! But, alas! I find my latent enmity to God too often rising in secret dissatisfactions with his deal-

ings towards me, against the strongest reasons, and the highest obligations! O the enmity of the heart to God! and, it may be, none may so clearly see it, or so much suspect it, till they are under powerful convictions, or come to be tried with some very afflicting providence.

My dear people! with my most affectionate thankfulness for your tender pity and kindness under this heavy affliction, and your great respect to the dear deceased, I desire your prayers that we may be supported, sanctified, comforted, and quickened; that we may so behave ourselves in such a trying dispensation, as to glorify God, and so improve it as to get and live in an habitual and actual readiness for death and eternity. For *me* in particular, that I may be excited to more earnest labours for your eternal salvation, and may be able to answer the *affectionate wish of my dying child*; and that the *Spirit of God* may greatly quicken and prosper me, with my dear and reverend colleague in the whole of our ministry; and, in particular; give both to you and yours the most desirable light of his countenance in your dying moments.

But I cannot tell how to end my sermon without a plain address to you all, in the particular characters of *parents* and *children* upon this occasion.

1st. To those who are *Parents*.

O both now and constantly consider your *children* have immortal souls, but very frail and dying bodies; that they are hastening to death and eternity; that their present life is the only time of preparation for them, and this time is utterly uncertain; that, as God has graciously given them to you, he has committed their most precious souls to your special care, and will require them of you; and that now is the only season you are certain of to labour in their preparation for that eternity and judgment they are hastening to.

O!

O! do you not love your *children*, do you not pity them under their temporal afflictions? And are you not ready to do and suffer any thing for their temporal comfort, which is but for a few uncertain moments? And do not you love their immortal *souls*? Do not you pity them under the terrible wrath and curse of God, and the destroying power of sin and Satan? And can you quietly see and let them go on in sin or vanity, or neglect of Christ? Are any of you willing they should descend to that dreadful place, and there, among devils and damned wretches, for ever cry and curse you for your cruel negligence to save them from that gulf of horror.

If a *child* of any among you be there already, or should be there hereafter through your neglect, O how horrible the guilt; how bitter the reflection! And if you should be damned with them too, O what a horrid welcome will they give you, when you go down with them into the infernal regions, and how insufferably upbraid you before the world, in the long day of judgment, and the eternity hereafter.

O, therefore, now stir up yourselves to improve the present time, to secure them from endless misery. Tell them of the glorious perfections of God who made, upholds, defends them; gives them every comfort, observes, disposes of, and will surely judge them. Tell them of the word of God, of his righteous, holy, spiritual, and extensive law; of the fearful threatenings and curses in it, of death and judgment, heaven, hell, eternity. Tell them of their immortal souls; of their sinfulness, guilt, and impotence; and of their condemned, dangerous, and undone condition. Tell them of the nature and necessity of regeneration by the holy Spirit; of the all-sufficiency and willingness of Christ to reconcile them to God, and save them. Tell them who Christ is, and what he has done and suffered on earth, and what he is doing in heaven for their redemption and

eternal bleffennes. Do what you can to fet him forth in all his offices, his benefits and glories. Tell them of the nature and neceffity of repenting and believing in him. Put them on reading the holy fcriptures, and the moft experimental and fearching writers: In all appointed ways, endeavour to lead them to the dear Redeemer, and never ceafe to pray and labour, till you fee his image formed in them.

2d. To you the *children*, both younger and elder.

O dear *children*, you plainly fee you may die in youth, and when you die you go into eternity; God has made you for eternity, he will bring you to eternity, and when to bring you to it, wholly depends on his fovereign pleafure: Your youngft age, your greateft health and ftrength, your merriment and confidence are no fecurity; nor can the fkill of the beft phyficians, nor can the power of medicines, nor your moft piteous cries, nor the moft earneft prayers of others, feure you from death or eternity in your early days. But thofe of you who now think yourfelves the fartheft off, may be the neareft to them.

And, O! if any of you fhould be furprifed, when you expect it not, with fome fatal and diftracting ficknefs, unprepared, what can you then do? It pleafed God, indeed, to give my child the exercife of her understanding all the while; but O how many others are, foon after they are taken ill, deprived of theirs? and this may be the cafe with you: in the name of Chrift I warn you of it. Delay now no longer, but, from this time forward, do your utmoft to confider your dreadful finfulnefs and danger; and look and feek very unceafingly to Jefus to fhew them to you; and, by renewing you, to fave you from them.

He fees you in all your wretchednefs; he pities you moft tenderly; he is loth that you fhould perih; his arms are open, ready to embrace you; he, by me, now calls you to him; he calls aloud; he
calls

calls again. O, if he were here in flesh, how kindly would he look upon you ! how would he stretch out his hands towards you ! how would he call you with a flood of tears ! how rejoice at seeing you move towards him ! and how greatly would his heart be grieved with you, refusing to come to him, that you might be saved, and be his for ever.

O will you at length now hear him ? will you now resolve that you will slight him no longer ? will you now yield to his melting calls ? will you now reply ? " O ! dearest Jesus, I will slight thee no more ! I will deny thee no longer ! I am willing to be thine ! I desire to be thine, and that thou mayest be mine entirely and for ever ! O I look to thee ! I come to thee ! I try to come ! I give myself to thee ! Thou, *Lord Jesus*, hast at last made me willing ! Thou hast raised these desires in me ! and O now answer them ! Now take me to be thine ! O renew my heart, and come into it, and dwell and reign in it as thine own for ever ! and I will for ever praise thee ! "

To conclude his present calls. If you thus comply, O then Christ is yours, and all his benefits are yours, and death is yours, and heaven is yours, eternity is yours, and God is yours ; they are yours for ever.

EXTRACTS

EXTRACTS from MR. HUNT'S SERMON,
upon the Death of MRS. GILL.

Preached at the SOUTH CHURCH in BOSTON,
August, 1771.

NEITHER my capacity or inclination allow me to deal in encomiums, or to set forth the piety and virtue of those persons, who, in the most serious hours of life, confessed themselves unworthy sinners, disclaimed all pretences to merit, and refused all consolation but what arose from the efficacy of that blood which made the atonement: it is well known that the late Mrs. Gill, the person of whom I am speaking, was, by her birth*, not only entitled to singular advantages to furnish her mind with useful knowledge, but placed under the forming hand of an indulgent parent, who made it no more the business than the *pleasure* of his life to instill in her mind those principles of knowledge and piety, which were so conspicuous in himself. Her singular improvements were highly to his satisfaction. She early in life discovered herself not only the ingenious but the serious mind, and as a specimen of it, † soon made open profession of the Christian religion by attending the ordinances of the gospel in the church of which her honoured father was pastor, in connection with the late venerable and justly esteemed Dr. Sewall. Her numerous acquaintance can witness that she did honour to her profession, by her *exemplary*

* She was daughter to the late reverend and learned Mr. Thomas Prince, who, although he had several children, only Mrs. Gill survived him.

† At about 16 years of age.

plary conduct, in the various departments of life to which she was called. From her first entrance into the marriage-state, she exhibited the bright example of an amiable wife, an endearing companion, and an indulgent mistress. Her natural inclination led her to books, and her many private papers discover a good acquaintance with them: A vein of piety spreads itself through them, which manifests the warm emotions of her mind, and that religion was both the business and pleasure of her life: And however she might distrust the genuineness of her religious exercises at certain seasons, yet their general course shews a mind under a deep habitual sense, not only of the *reality* of the important truths of the gospel, but of their intrinsic *excellency*; and that she felt such an efficacy in its doctrines and precepts, as made her rejoice in God, not so much as a means of safety from evil, as her only proper portion to live on.

During her last illness *, (which we know to be as severe, as long continued,) the whole course of her conduct amidst the obstinate struggles of animal nature, witnessed the singularly patient mind, and resigned Christian. In this season, as she had full possession of her rational powers, time was given for the most serious recollection: "Death is no courtier:" there is no jesting with a dying person: She viewed herself as such; and gave growing evidence of the excellency of that degree of religion she professed, in that it not only armed her with singular patience during a long and severe sickness, but made her rejoice at the thoughts of her dissolution. She declared herself a firm believer of the doctrines of the gospel, trusted she, in some degree, felt their energy,

* The author's personal acquaintance with Mrs. Gill, commenced with her last sickness, which was of the dropical kind, and of more than eight months continuance.

energy, and hoped to be an eternal monument of that grace of which she knew herself to be unworthy: And although, it is said, her life has not only been circumspect, but exemplary, yet, but a few hours previous to her dissolution, she declared she laid no stress, separate from her connections with our blessed Saviour, on her religious conduct of any kind, as having any moral efficacy to draw down the divine favour; but, discarding all other refuges, trusted solely and absolutely to that finished righteousness and atonement, revealed in the gospel, through our Lord Jesus Christ; which fully coincided with a declaration made many years since: "That she fled to the Blood of the Lamb; on that she depended for pardon, cleansing, acceptance, and all her salvation." With the utmost calmness of mind, in full possession of her rational powers, and without the least perceptible struggle of animal nature, she made a happy exchange, we trust, of this life, for heavenly glory.

DEVOUT

DEVOUT MEDITATIONS

OF

MRS. SARAH GILL.

INTRODUCTION.

PPRIVATE papers, especially such as are wrote on one's personal profit or amusement, without any view to their appearing in the public eye, may be considered as a glass which not only discovers a person's natural genius and improvement, but also the real moral qualities of the heart. Mrs. Gill had much recommended herself to her numerous acquaintance in the course of her life, which made them desirous to see some of her more private papers when deprived of the benefit of her company and conversation: for the writings of an intimate friend, while they convey useful instruction, make us feel the generous and warm emotions of friendship, and doubly profit, because they doubly please.

Those of her papers, which it was thought proper to subjoin to this discourse, are but a small part of the many which she was willing to save from ruin, having put an end to many of her writings with her own hands; perhaps the public may see more of them in some future time. A diary of her life begins

gins with the year 1743, when she was about fourteen years of age. She writes her design in keeping it "is to assist her in the Christian and divine life." Her mind appears to have been first religiously affected about the time in which she began her diary; for she mentions, the "first twelve years of my life were spent thoughtless of God and eternity." Her conversion does not seem to have been so sensible or sudden as many others may have experienced, as she declares herself to have been "gradually enlightened in the knowledge of God and Christ." At this season she complains of much error and darkness. Her own words are, "One error I went into, was judging of my state by the experiences of others, whereas the word of God is the only standard by which we can judge of our state." Her diary plainly discovers that she studied the rules by which the Christian life was to be directed, and this led her to make frequent complaints of her criminal inattention to divine things, and the strength of her own corruptions: it also points out the various methods she pursued to animate and assist her in the religious life, as devout meditation, serious self-examination, joined with prayer and fasting: and although she appears to have been acquainted with the genuine workings of true piety in the heart, and was herself persuaded of it, at certain seasons in particular, yet she says, "I find myself formal and slighty in duty; unwatchful; unfruitful, and unexemplary to others:" While she saw, she lamented these deficiencies, and drew up the favourable, and we have reason to think just conclusion, that amidst all her darkness and doubts, she was formed by divine grace for the "holy employments of Heaven, and had chosen God for her portion."

The following papers are independent on each other; are selected and placed with little alteration in the same order in which she left them; are chiefly
devotional,

devotional, and shew that she was not so delighted with books and company as to be forgetful of her own heart: She justly thought that the important truths of Scripture, in a complex view, were well formed to touch every principle of action in the human breast, therefore that a proper knowledge or belief of them came armed with every motive by which the mind is wont to be moved; and that true religion, while it enlightened the understanding and convinced the judgment, warmed also the affections, and led the mind into habitual converse with God.

May the papers here selected be not only profitable and entertaining to her more particular friends and acquaintance, but to all into whose hands they may providentially fall: And may they feel those traces of devotion in their hearts in this life, which are so necessary a preparative for the blessedness of the heavenly state!

Some of the PAPERS wrote by the late
MRS. GILL.

No. I.

On Christian Magnanimity.

THIS life is a scene of trials. Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards.—And as mankind in general, so Christians in particular, have troubles to grapple with.—Their glorious Leader forewarned them of it in his last discourse; “in the world ye shall have tribulation.” And as the Christian has oftentimes peculiar trials, so he has a peculiar way of *overcoming* them: There is doubtless such a thing as natural fortitude and greatness of mind. When persons of a calm and manly temper

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duly study the vicissitudes of human life, and by comparing one thing with another, learn to set a just estimation on things, this will inspire them with contempt of many things, which the less discerning shall esteem at a mighty rate! Consequently he will bear up under the loss of what another shall account an insupportable evil. But Christian fortitude is quite another thing, rises from another principle, is cherished by other motives, and continued by other supports.

The principle from whence it arises is *religion*, or a proper temper of mind *towards God*, and a just sense of *one's self*.

1. *A supreme regard to God* will dispose it to a calm, dutiful acquiescence in his will; this will silence all murmurings, subdue all discontent, compose each undue inclination, humble the native pride of the human heart, and dispose it to a complacency in God as its portion and chief good. A branch of this religion consists in *Faith*, a firm belief of the grand points of revelation, of the truth of the divine promises, the unchangeableness of the covenant, the veracity and ability of the Mediator of that covenant: A fixed faith in the doctrine of a future state of retribution, when all things which now appear disordered and irregular, will then be seen to have been conducted with the most admirable skill, the happiest connection, and surprizing harmony, to attain the wisest ends! This will cause it to triumph in the cross, while it looks not at seen but unseen things; while it views the *eternal weight* of glory working out for it, by means of affliction, *those afflictions* (however grievous to sense, and hard for reason to submit unto) will appear *light*, and but for a *moment*.

2. *A proper temper of mind towards one's self*, which can be found in none but a true Christian, will lead it to the exercise of *humility*. As a creature, a mean creature,

creature, it will feel its dependence on God; hence be led to place its whole reliance on him; own its subjection to him, and resign to his government. When fore trials are upon it, this will be its language, "*It is THE LORD*, let him do as he pleases with his creature." Again, as it is a *sinful creature*, this proper temper will lead it to the exercise of *deep abasement*: It will be so far from resenting its afflictions as injuries, that it will patiently say with the prophet, "I will bear the indignation of the Lord because I have sinned against him," and "wherefore should a living man complain for the punishment of his sins," in a slight affliction *here*, whereas *those sins* merit infinite punishment *hereafter*! This will quiet the mind under deserved calamities; for, while it views the adorable justice, the spotless purity, and at the same time the wondrous patience, yea long-suffering of God towards it, how can it reply to him!

The *motives* by which it is continued, are conformed to these principles;—*a love to God*, to his will, providence, and glory;—*to its own spiritual advantage here*, and access of glory hereafter;—the covenant and promises of support under, improvement of, and final deliverance from, all its afflictions. The *supports* by which it is cherished, are the promises of the gospel, the fulness there is in Christ for it, of grace and light, of holiness and comfort; the consolations and influences of the Spirit, and the believing prospect of a final conquest.

No. 2.

God All, and in All!

LOST in the unfathomable abyfs of thy greatness, thine infinite excellence, thy resplendent glories, I know not how to adore thee! And yet, while

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I contemplate,

I contemplate, I am all adoration ! Shall I attempt to praise thee for thy wonderful works of creation, those bright manifestations of thy power, and thy wisdom, these declare their Former, but these *are not Thyself* ! Shall I contemplate thy providence which directs and governs all the universal system of animate and inanimate, rational and spiritual beings. — This speaks thee all-sovereign, wise, omnipotent, and good ! Shall I enter deeper, and sing the redemption of man : How Deity was joined to humanity ! Shall I endeavour to trace the wondrous scheme from the covenant of redemption, and carry my thoughts through all the types and shadows of the old dispensation, till the great antitype appeared in flesh ; and thence, through all he did, and all he suffered, to that astonishing period, when our divine Redeemer bowed his head, and declared *it is finished* ! Shall I proceed and take a view of the works of his grace in the hearts of innumerable multitudes in every period since his ascension ! Shall I cast my eyes *backwards* on the various displays of his conquering power, in what he has done for his church, and carry them *forwards* to what he has promised shall yet be done till time shall end, and all his people are gathered together in one ! Shall I go on to that wondrous period the consummation of all things ? when all his conquests are completed, and he, the Almighty Victor, shall appear at the head of an innumerable company which no man can number, surrounded by ten thousand times ten thousands of his mighty angels ! By faith shall I view him as the illustrious Judge of quick and dead, seated on his judgment-seat, all nations being gathered before him, *life and death eternal* issuing from his lips ! — At the end of that day behold him finishing the œconomy of the present state, and in all the pomp of regal power ascending into the highest heavens ! and there opening the mysteries of providence and grace, to the perpetual and growing admiration

ration and delight of saints and angels through eternity ! Shall I view him as he is Lord of angels ! and Lord of men ! and Lord of worlds ! And when all these thoughts are collected in *one grand idea*, shall I then stop and think I have seen enough ? No ! This is but a speck to thee, *the infinite Divinity* ! I know that thou art yet behind the veil, that

— — “ *Thou, thou art all !*

“ *My soul flies up and down in thoughts of thee,*

“ *And finds herself but at the centre still !*

“ *I AM, thy name ! Existence, all thine own !*

“ *Creation's nothing to Thee, the great Original !*

Fain would I know all that my feeble nature is capable of taking in ; by what I see, I know I see but a faint ray of thy glory ! That ray astonishes me ! I am absorbed in the ocean of immensity ! and find that all nations are as nothing, yea less than nothing, they are vanity to thee ! — What then am I ! but a little mote swimming on the surface of the creation. — But O ! when I think of thee, to what do I sink ?

“ *Now at thy feet with awful fear,*

“ *Adoring low I'll fall ;*

“ *With joy I shrink to nothing here,*

“ *Before th' eternal All !*

O thou self-existent ! self-sufficient Being ! — Let me know of Thee all that mortality is capable of knowing : not to gratify a vain curiosity ; but let me know thee so as to love thee, so as to form me into a resemblance of thee in moral rectitude, — knowing thy greatness will humble me, knowing thy sovereignty will subdue me ; — knowing thy holiness will abase me ; thy goodness will melt me ; thy wisdom will astonish me ; thy grace will allure me ; therefore I beg to see thee as thou art in the face of Jesus the

Mediator; a sight of thee, out of him, will consume me; but through him, attract me; and then I shall fly to and embrace him, and be for him, and my all shall be swallowed up in him who is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person.—Then, to the only living and true God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, shall I devote my all, and spend an eternity, in the sublimest adorations, services, and praises, to him that sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever. Amen. Hallelujah!

No. 3.

Breathings after GOD.

O ! THOU unbounded, self-sufficient Being! Thou object of my happiness! Thou fountain of my bliss! Let me implore thy favour. This restless soul was formed by thee, and formed capable of happiness:—My aspiring mind aims at it, O direct my search!—Let my ambition terminate on thee!—On thee let my whole delight be placed, my wishes centre!—It is not in any inferior good to satisfy me:—Friends are precious,—outward enjoyments pleasant,—intellectual attainments far better;—but to know thee, to love thee, to enjoy thy smiles, this is my life.—I am not, I never can be satisfied without thee.—With thee I am full and happy, I am rich, I am more than contented.—In thee I possess all that my nature is capable of.—Amidst storms I am calm—in solitude I have a companion—in sickness I have ease—This is my highest felicity, I can have, nor desire greater, that “Thou art mine, and I am thine.”—And may a worthless worm, a clod, a nothing, yea a sinful nothing, dare to speak it?—Let heaven be astonished, and earth amazed!—
What?

What? dare to love a God!—Low lay my soul, and humbly list what God himself approves.—Thou knowest my inmost desires, and art acquainted with my most secret thoughts; and O my sacred witness, may I not appeal to thee, and say, My supreme delight is in God.

Ever the same is the object of my bliss; ever active is the principle within me—therefore ever in pursuit of a something to make amends for its earnest desires. And where is that something? Where have I found it?—the world affords nothing but toil, vanity and tumult;—Friendship is but a partial, and Ease a temporary pleasure; riches give no satisfaction to my mind;—books and study, my favourite employments, will not please always. Abstract from sensitive things—far from all finite views, I have had happy moments.—My mind has been raised to a noble elevation, I have even not only despised all other low objects, but looked on *myself* with contempt—What can thus degrade myself in my own eyes—What thus exalt a soul so self-abased?—Why, O my soul, art thou so unable to answer?—It is unanswerable! and yet this more than answers, a God fills all, is all, and all in all.—It is a relation to him that makes me any thing—separate from this, being is nothing, or worse than nothing, a curse.—O let me be thine!—be this my whole desire.—Infinite fulness is ready to communicate full happiness!—O transporting heart-enlivening thought!—I'll dwell on it—I'll live on it—yes, I'll dwell near this fountain!—Be gone, ye lying cheats of sense.—Adieu, ye gaudy trifles—My soul springs forth and grasps superior bliss. Perfect excellence is the beauty I pant to see—I cannot descend to love a lesser: No; all other love is coldness, is perfect indifference to this divine ardour.

No. 4.

"**T**HE Lord is a God of judgment: Blessed are they that wait for him."—He knows when is the fittest time to bestow such a particular favour;—he knows how to prepare me for the reception of it, and he knows when I am prepared.—How often have I impatiently pursued, desired, and prayed for a mercy, he has seemed to deny. I have gone on to seek, till almost discouraged; have been ready to think either I was wrong in seeking, or it was in vain to seek, and just as I have been giving it over as *a gone case*, his mercy has surprized me; I have been brought out of long distress, into great light and peace! Then I have seen reason to bless him for delaying till *that very time*; and the timing the providence has enhanced the value of the mercy.

It is wise to wait for God's time, seeing he knows, and will order every thing in the very best time.—It is wise, as it is my interest; and it is so, as it is my duty. Adored be his goodness, who has condescended to join the duty, the interest, and the comfort of his people in one.—They are blessed that dutifully wait for him: blessed even *in waiting*—never happier than quietly waiting for his salvation. There is a rest, a peace, a satisfaction in waiting, that the enjoyment in itself cannot give: blessed also *when they receive* that for which they waited.—Many a Christian has blessed God for delaying his favours, and thereby leading them through many exercises of faith, of hope, of humble prayer, which never had been added to their experiences, if he had given immediate sensible answers; and those views they have had of God, and experiences of divine things they have met with on these occasions, have been some of the brightest evidences of their grace, and most e-
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minent experiences of their lives ; and they can witness to the blessedness of waiting for him ! And surely I must yield my testimony to this ! I have proved it !

No. 5.

O ! GOD of grace, God of love, return to me, or never more shall my soul have rest. I wander in an endless circle of misery, and can find nought to solace me, without a God. My outward circumstances on all accounts are as agreeable as I desire—but ah ! What avails the shining of the sun to prisoners shut in a dark dungeon ;—no more does all I enjoy make me happy, until I see thy beauty, and read thy love in the smiles of thy benign countenance on me ! O thou Majesty Divine ! My soul panteth for thee ! my heart crieth for the living God. To see thy power and thy glory as thou art revealing it to some, and as I have seen it in former gladsome days in thy sanctuary ! O when shall I once more see and feel a present God !—To-morrow is a high festival to the Lord ! To-morrow Jesus has appointed a banquet ! And will he call me there ? Call me, not as Esther called Haman to procure his punishment, but as HE, in the days of his flesh, called his dear disciples to hold intimate endearing fellowship with them ? It may be the last sacrament I shall ever attend, the last opportunity to sit with Christ at his table ! O may the attendance be an emblem of the marriage-supper of the Lamb in his Father's house above ! O to meet *thee* there, my adorable Jesus ! There to give myself to thee ! There to receive thee in all thy glorious characters, thy sacred and thy saving offices, and there to drink of the fatness of thine house ! My soul desires to seek and wait for thee, more than morning watchers, weary of a cold
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and dark night, look for the dawn of day! My soul *must*, and, if thou assist it, *shall* follow hard after thee! O I cannot be without thee! Thy presence is my life. Be not angry while I ask for life! My happiness through eternity is embottomed on the plea!—

No. 6.

HOW excellent is thy loving kindness, O God, therefore will I put my trust in thee! How glorious was my God, my King, this morning in the galleries of his grace! What the riches of his love! I went early with desire to meet him, I went to see his beauty, and inquire in his temple. My heart was on the search for God. And O marvelous to relate, HE meeteth sinners! HE, the high, the lofty, and the holy God, meeteth the vilest and the chief of all the guilty race! He met me in that most glorious declaration, *Isai. xli 17, 18.* He met me in the cordial truths deduced from them. He opened a river on the high place of his ordinances—and he caused me to see a fountain in the valley of perplexing fears.—O what grace, what fulness resides in the Mediator! What fulness has he to bestow on our poor needy panting souls; and how free, how ready to bestow them! yea how desirous is he to shower them on us, as desirous is he to confer, as intent upon it, as he was to purchase them. What remains then for me but to open my mouth wide, to expand my heart, and welcome the effusion of divine influences. Away my indifference, away my unbelief, lie down at the breast of that promise above, and draw consolation; be satisfied with the bliss it ensures, be delighted with the good it confers: O my soul, haste, haste to thy solace! Here is marrow and fatness—Here all desirables. I bid a glad adieu to every thing else as my *good*, and take my
God

God for my all, to love him, and to live upon him:
—I will not love husband, parent, friends, houses,
lands, riches, pleasures, nor any thing in compare
with MY GOD, MY ALL!—

No. 7.

Internal Evidences of a renewed Heart.

MY heart is very deceitful—but so far as I know it, I know when I feel happiest, and what I delight most sensibly in: I love my friends dearly—but I love the presence of God more. I delight in good society, but I prize communion with the Father of spirits more.—I love to serve my friends, but I delight vastly more in feeling my very will entirely subject to God.—Yea I have found an unspeakable pleasure in having my will crossed, and my carnal desires denied by him.—And I do know that I never felt better pleased, than when I surrendered my will, affections, and all my concerns into his hands, and left it with him to do just what he pleased therewith —Is not this real religion? If it is not, I know not what it can be—nature cannot attain it: It is contrary to nature to love to be crossed, and this because God chuses it—Can less than a divine power work this in such a sinful heart? Surely no. Be thankful, O my soul, to the God of grace—Can I ever praise him enough for bringing vile wretched me out of darkness into marvellous light!—My errand now to the throne of grace, is to get more of this heavenly temper.—I would have it the very breath of my heart daily, hourly, and in every moment of my life, “Father, not as I will, but as thou wilt.”—O my heavenly Father, give me this conformity to thee—Let my will be crossed, humbled, broken, till it is swallowed up in thine. Let thy will
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be the rule of mine; empty me of self, and mould me into thine image, for Christ's sake. AMEN.

No. 8.

I TRUST I have had more real delight in the things of God the past month, and more solid pleasure than ever I took in the world and all its gay allurements. The word and the divine truths of the gospel have been prized and delighted in, especially those which relate to the divine person, wondrous offices, actions, benefits, love and grace of the blessed Redeemer—I have loved to read of him, and meditate on him! yet, alas, I know not what to think of myself. My heart is so apt to lose this gust, to forsake this favour of his name, to return to sloth, and yet farther to wander from him; and some days I have such a backwardness to secret prayer, that it is, when performed, gone about as a task, and I have no spiritual views of God or desires after spiritual mercies.—Again, I get some faint glimpse, and seem to want to have the enjoyment of God's presence, and to be afresh brought near to him, even to his seat, to behold his glory, to see his beauty, and that I may have the highest esteem of him, and ardent love to him, and heart-satisfying communion with him—Again, I return to a dull indifference, yea, to an absolute *negligence* of him, so that I can come to no clear satisfactory conclusion about my state. If I am a believer, I am the lowest of all; if a hypocrite, a self-condemned one, and in awful danger of perishing. Lord Jesus. I beg thee to have pity on me, and save me to the uttermost; thou canst do it, I believe thou canst, and I beg thy free mercy. True, I am a great sinner, but my sins, though they deserve infinite punishment, do not surpass thy powerful grace, for that is infinite. I would flee to thee, and venture on thy

thy rich grace, venture my soul upon thy grace, and beg to be saved from my sinful nature as well as guilty state, for the one is my malady as well as the other ! Lord seize my whole soul, sanctify and cleanse every part of it, and let me from this evening be thine, in an everlasting union and sure covenant, and never more be my own or the worlds ; but love, fear, serve, and delight in thee for ever. Lord, let this be the happy event that shall succeed all my folly, vileness, and guilt, the great issue of all my wanderings, my apostasies and perplexities, and thine shall be the glory for ever. AMEN and AMEN.

No. 9.

" How most exact is nature's frame !

" How wise th' Eternal Mind !

" His counsels never change the scheme

" That his first thoughts design'd.

NOR is it possible to add to, or alter that plan for the better. His foreknowledge and wisdom excludes the supposition of any after amendment :--It was compleat in all its parts : Each perfectly adjusted, so as to form one harmonious whole.

I blush with a consciousness of my extreme folly, in every dissatisfied thought I entertain with any of thy dispensations ; O thou wise Governor ! I am ashamed of my base ingratitude in that, when thou hast assured me, that in all thy dispensations, in every afflicting stroke, in every cross, yea, in every scourge of thy rod, still thou art " ever mindful of thy covenant : " always acting in concurrence with it :--Not a single circumstance befalls me but what is agreeable to that gracious charter.—However intricate and dark my circumstances appear to human reason, yet I have no room to distrust thee ; they are all clear in thine eye ; and though I know not what

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is to befall me a moment before hand, whether downy peace, or dire calamities await me, yet this I know, that putting myself and my all into thine hand, I shall be safe;—safe for time, and safe for eternity.—I hope I have often and often committed my immortal part into thine hands, and laid the weight of its salvation on my divine Redeemer, and with sacred pleasure left it with him:—To his all-gracious care have I also repeatedly trusted all my temporal concerns, and with an entire affiance left them with him. And O! with what sacred serenity have I then walked under the shadow of his wings? How did I rise above all my fears; above all my sufferings; above all my enemies; and in the triumphs of faith could say,

“ *I know I’ve made my refuge God,*
 “ *And found a most secure abode;*
 “ *Have walk’d all day beneath his shade;*
 “ *And there at night rested my head.*
 “ *Now I will say, My God, thy pow’r*
 “ *Shall be my refuge and my tow’r,*
 “ *I, that am form’d of feeble dust,*
 “ *Make thine Almighty arm my trust;*
 “ *How happy I! my Maker’s care*
 “ *Shall keep me from the fowler’s snare, &c.*

Thus blest was I in the sweets of heavenly peace, while I reposed myself in the arms of eternal Truth.

What remains, O my soul, but a *renewal* of those acts of faith? This will ensure renewed happiness—Go, then, and deposit all thy case with him, on whose shoulder hangs the weight of the whole creation! Go and carry thy burdens, thy wants, thy griefs, thy fears, thy desires, to him, and leave all at the foot of his throne;—having done this, rest satisfied that he who is the Hearer of prayer will, in his time, redress thee;—that nothing shall befall thee but what infinite wisdom sees to be best! Stedfastly
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continue to confide in him: Believe his promises, and live upon his faithfulness: So shall they be life unto thee; and strength to all thy soul! What are all the pleasures of sense, the blandishments of the world, but nauseous dregs? What the society of the most knowing, and best of friends? it is empty to the communion I long after! What the knowledge of nature, to true spiritual acquaintance with nature's Origin!—Never had I a taste, nay, nor a conception of pleasure, till a ray of divine glory beamed on me, and warmed this heart, and dissolved it with love! The heavenly lustre spread all around me; I welcomed its illuminations, and felt its enlivening influence! I then opened into marvellous light, and inexpressible communications followed!—And though the divine Being had before appeared in his most dreadful attributes, and I was in fearful horror, knowing my sins, my enmity and obstinacy, I considered him as my almighty Enemy; and was trembling under the weight of my guilt, and his anger; yet no sooner did he by his Spirit reveal himself in his true character, but that inward revelation wrought such effects, and was followed with such consequences, as nothing but almighty grace can perform.—From union to him by faith, flows communion with him; and this communion *I have called*, and nothing else can I call, *Happiness*.

No. 10.

FAIN would I get my heart in tune for the sacred exercises of piety; but ah! my affections are cold, my mind lazy, and I cannot with vigour perform any duty! When will my release come from this burdensome clog of clay? When shall my happy jubilee appear! when I shall get free from this principle of sin *within*, from a distracting world *without*!—When shall this heart cease to be treacherous,

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my dear Redeemer! When wilt thou take the entire possession of me, and cause me to live wholly to thee! I am weary and sick of my sloth and inactivity in the sublime business of devotion. Thou deservest to be served with the height of pious affections;—nothing less than the burning ardour of fervent love should accompany each prayer, each thanksgiving each ejaculation, yea, each thought! But, alas! my devout expressions freeze on my lips, my heart is cold to all the impressions of redeeming love!

—That it is so, is, I hope, a burden to me. I cannot be easy, I must arise and seek him whom “my soul loveth;” loveth, though with so faint a flame, so infinitely short of the merit of the Object.

As long as I am in this tabernacle, I expect to groan under my burdens—I have many kinds of burdens—But the greatest of all is, the plague of my own heart: I have the highest reason to cry out with the great apostle, and great Christian, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of sin!” Blessed be God, a Deliverer is provided: Jesus has undertaken the work, and has he not omnipotence to effect it?—Be encouraged, then, O my soul, to hold out in thy contest with sin—resisting its motions—struggling, fighting, wrestling even until death: so shalt thou gain the conquest, and receive the *laurel* of him, who purchased both the victory and the reward by his spotless righteousness and meritorious sufferings—Bear up a little longer, and press through all difficulties:—When once thou gettest free, no more shalt thou cry out, of a dark understanding, cold affections, perverse will, nor murmuring passions, but all thy soul shall be sweetly attuned to the business and blessedness of that state where God is served in all the perfect beauties of holiness!—Amen. Even so LORD JESUS, may this be the lot of the unworthiest of thy creatures, even for thine own mercies sake. *Amen and Amen.*

It was thought proper to annex the following LETTER, wrote by Mrs. GILL, to the foregoing papers : As such a serious plain Address, often proves more serviceable than the most laboured Composition. It was wrote in the Year 1755. and sealed with this Order, " Not to be opened till after my Death : " And, in Compliance with her request, it was not.

To all my young Acquaintance, into whose hands these lines may come.

AS from the invifible world, (that world of fpirits into which mine will have entered before this is prefented you) I now addrefs you; and I earneftly intreat you to receive my meffage.

I may now fay, fince I fhall be beyond the fenfibilities of this mortal life, that it is a difinterefted love and concern for your beft good, that prompts me to this. With pity have I often thought on your cafe : Frequently has my heart bled in fecret for thofe of you who live efranged from God, ignorant of the pleafures of the divine life, unacquainted with the lovely Redeemer, with communion with God, the gracious influences of his Spirit, and the tokens of his love and favour ! And while I have feen you engaged in a round of amufements and fenfual gratifications, the world fmiling on you, and you hearken-

ing to its delusive promises—pleasing yourselves with its airy vanities, have thought you, (as you really are), a company of spirits made and bound for eternity, and speedily hastening to it, and uncertain whether you should be happy in the society of perfected spirits, and in the satisfying presence of God for ever, or be miserably fixed in a state of enmity to him, in company with unholy devils: And yet you are diverting on the borders of this eternity, as securely as tho' you could never enter into it. Let me therefore intreat you, by all the motives proper to sway you, as reasonable, as immortal beings, to secure your eternal welfare without any delay—till that is done you are in constant hazard of eternal death: The next hour may be the finishing, the deciding period—can you be easy to stand on the brink of ETERNITY, ready to fall, and not know how your state will be determined at the awful bar of GOD?—Dare you venture into his presence, whose all-seeing eye penetrates the inmost recesses of your hearts, and not know whether he is your FRIEND or your ALMIGHTY ENEMY? Can you think of appearing before him as a JUDGE, and rest till you have secured him as your SAVIOUR?—Are not your souls precious? Do you really see their importance? If you do not, go visit a dying bed—see what that will teach you, read the word of God, and there you will find the Maker of souls tells you, that they are of more worth than a *whole world*.—But this is not all, consider the value Christ set on them; to save souls, the eternal WORD condescended to veil his glory, to take on him the form of a servant, and in that form to suffer and die.—Read the history of his life—his humble state—his hardships and indignities—his painful ignominious death—the agonies of his soul—his bearing the wrath of God—suffering under the immense weight of the divine displeasure.—Read his
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agony in the garden, and on the cross, and all loudly speak the worth of each of your souls.

Would you be happy in life? The ways of vital godliness are indeed pleasant, and the keeping God's commandments brings a peace passing understanding! Would you be fitted to meet death without terror? Come to Christ, and he will take away the sting of it, and it shall be to you a sweet passage way to glory! Would you be safe for eternity? An interest in Christ will give you such a sure title to eternal life, as nothing can annul!—What pleas shall I use to persuade you to be religious? Shall I tell you *your all* depends upon it; that this is the only way to glorify God, and that you cannot be happy here or hereafter, without it? Shall I allure or terrify you? Shall I tell you that Heaven with all its joys, that God *himself* must be yours, or you must have Hell, with all its amazing terrors, the guilt of sin, the stings of conscience, the wrath of an incensed God, and a flighted Saviour, for your miserable portion to eternity! Can you think of the contrast, and hesitate a moment which to chuse!—I speak as from ETERNITY, won't you believe me?—Shall I allure you by the grace of the gospel? Shall I tell you of the amiableness, the transcendent loveliness of the blessed Mediator—That he is altogether glorious in his person, and in his mediatorial character: That he is all-sufficient to save you. Shall I assure you he is now *willing* to do it, offers himself with all his benefits to you, and waits your acceptance—If you will accept him, he will be your almighty Friend, your satisfying Portion, your prevalent Intercessor, and he will be all this, *for ever*.—You shall be filled with love, joy, and peace—Shall see such glories, and feel such happiness, as is beyond the conception of the most raised mind on earth to conceive! This is something of the bliss Christ now offers you!—And what answer will you now give him?—Will
you

you accept or refuse?—one or the other you must do.—Do you begin to consider? And are you ready to ask, “What methods shall I use to get into the narrow path which leads to life.”—It is, no doubt, your indispensable duty immediately “to repent and believe the gospel:” And, although none but God can give you this repentance and faith, yet, as he usually works through the instrumentality of means, as the most probable method to obtain them,—take time for *serious meditation*—let not one day pass without it.—Diligently attend all the means of grace, public, private, and secret—Be much in secret prayer—hear every sermon as for your life, and as though it was the last—Labour to keep eternity in view—labour to realize the eye of God always on you—these are powerful incentives to diligence.—Associate with the fearers of God—seek for proper companions to whom you may open your cases, and do not be afraid or ashamed to do it—O do not be ashamed to appear openly or singularly good;—bear on your minds that you cannot get to heaven without pains, arduous labours, and persevering strivings. Religion is not the work of a day,—nor is it a thing to come in by the bye, but it is the one thing necessary, and must be the chief business of your lives;—you must give God your whole hearts.—Do not think you can serve God and sin together—but remember that real religion is a conformity of the soul to God in moral dispositions, and therefore that sin must be forsaken—you must turn from *all sin*, or you will never turn to God.—Resolve in a humble dependance on the help of Christ, to delay no longer, but immediately to set about this great work in earnest.

From



From the BOSTON EVENING POST.

August 12, 1771.

LAST Monday died, aged 43 years, Mrs. SARAH GILL, consort of Mr. MOSES GILL, merchant, the last descendant of the late Reverend and learned Mr. THOMAS PRINCE, pastor of the Old South Church in this town.—The great Author of Nature had bestowed on her a genius uncommonly strong and penetrating, and placed her under the care of an affectionate father, whose pleasing employment was to cultivate her infant mind, and guide her in the exercise and improvement of those talents with which she was so liberally endowed.—And the early advances she made in useful knowledge, together with the benevolent disposition which graced her whole deportment, more than answered the fondest expectation of her kind parent. As she had been taught in her childhood to reverence the Christian religion, in riper years, upon a candid and accurate examination of the evidence upon which it was founded, she was fully convinced of its divine Original; and that a strict conformity to its precepts constituted the highest happiness of which the human soul is capable.—Having determined that the sacred Scriptures were the only true criterion of her actions, she made it her daily care to examine herself thereby: And, under the happy influence of so wise a determination, she performed the various social and moral duties with an unaffected ease: To her parents she was observant and dutiful; to her husband

band she was tender and affectionate; to her domestics indulgent and beneficent. — She was ever amiable among her acquaintance — a constant and warm friend, and never failed with compassion and generosity to relieve the necessities of the poor. — Nor was her benevolence confined within the narrow limits of *private* connections, but extended to the whole human race: And having great merit in the literary world, she had the advantage of being fully acquainted with the state of mankind; and from a thorough conviction of their right to freedom, and the importance of it to their felicity, both here and hereafter, she, to her latest hour, fervently wished and prayed for the liberty of the world in general, and of her own country in particular — But with all her accomplishments, it must be mentioned as worthy of imitation, that she ever discovered that Christian humility which arises from a just sense of human imperfection; and therefore she did not build her hopes of future happiness upon her own righteousness, but relied wholly on him whose merit and atonement is *all sufficient*. She bore her long and severely painful illness, with a fortitude which was at once demonstrative of her own sincerity, and of the reality of that religion which supported her. — She saw the approaches of what men call Death, with pleasure, looking upon it as a transition to that life and immortality which is brought to light by the gospel of Jesus Christ — Her near relatives and numerous friends find their only consolation, under so heavy a bereavement, in contemplating that glory which she is now undoubtedly in the full possession of. — Her body was conveyed to the grave with every mark of that unfeigned esteem which she so highly deserved.

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